



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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TEACHERS HEADING OFFSHORE TO LEARN ABOUT GULF OF MEXICO CORAL REEFS

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary staff has invited educators from around the country to get out of their classrooms and into the Gulf of Mexico for a five day educators' underwater exploration workshop, "Down Under, Out Yonder." The Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) manages the sanctuary, which partners with the non-profit Gulf of Mexico Foundation to organize this popular annual event.

"Our goal for the workshops is to offer teachers firsthand experience with exploration and research. You cannot find that kind of background in a textbook," said Shelley DuPuy, sanctuary education coordinator. "Not only do the teachers get hands-on training, they get to interact with educators from around the country. They exchange ideas that result in new classroom dynamics. This has a direct impact on the students and that is what is most important."

During the classroom session, the 18 participants are given a crash course in coral reef biology and ecology. They use those new skills during a three-day cruise to the sanctuary, hosted by the foundation. While underwater, teachers will count fish and other animals and conduct general observations on the coral reef environment. SCUBA diving will be done aboard a 100-foot converted oil and gas crew boat equipped for diving.

"The most valuable part of this workshop is the curriculum the educators will develop based upon what they learn during the workshop," said Kelly Drinnen, education specialist and organizer of the annual workshop. "These teachers are training tomorrow's leaders in science and technology."

The "Down Under Out Yonder" 2006 Participants are as follows:

Christina Anders	Taylor Elementary School, Burleson, TX
Stephen Anderson	Amerman Elementary School, Northville, MI
Joanne Brown	Lakewood High School, Lakewood, CO
Erin Cosky	Gulf Breeze High School, Gulf Breeze, FL
Carrie DeMott	Signal Mountain Middle School, Signal Mountain, TN
Nicole Feldman	Clear Lake High School, Houston, TX
Jeffrey Graham	Windsor Forest High School, Savannah, GA
Barry Hanke	Thurgood Marshall High School, Houston, TX
Susan Hieter	International School of Aruba, Wayaca, Aruba "Dutch Caribbean"
Connie Kassner	Cameron Park Zoo, Waco, TX

Marisa Lopez	Environmental Education Consultant, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Karen Meites	Heritage Hall Lower School, Oklahoma City, OK
Jody Navy	William James Middle School, Fort Worth, TX
Leslie Roberts	Goose Creek ISD, Baytown, TX
Dawn Sherwood	Highland Springs High School, Highland Springs, VA
Chad Sopata	Highland Park Middle School, Dallas, TX
Miriam Sutton	Newport Middle School, Newport, NC
Robert Tisdell	Home School, Austin, TX

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program seeks to increase the public awareness of America's maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programs. Today, the sanctuary program manages 13 national marine sanctuaries and one coral reef ecosystem reserve that encompass more than 150,000 square miles of America's ocean and Great Lakes natural and cultural resources.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, over 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

National Ocean Service: <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov>

National Marine Sanctuary Program: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary: <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov>

Gulf of Mexico Foundation: <http://www.gulfmex.org>